

**R E M A R K S**

Careful consideration has been given to the Official Action of May 21, 2004 and reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

Claims 15, 18-30 are pending in the application.

The Examiner has rejected claims 15, 18 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Watts.

Claims 26, 27, 29 and 30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by Stobbart.

Claims 15 and 18-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Galle in view of Watts.

Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Stobbart.

Claims 22-25 have been indicated as being directed to allowable subjected matter.

Independent claim 15 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 22 and since the Examiner has indicated that claim 22 contains allowable subject matter it is respectfully submitted that claim 15 is in allowable condition along with its dependent claims.

Claim 26, the other independent claim in the application has been amended and is considered to be clearly distinguished from Stobbart which has been applied thereto.

In this regard, the invention is directed to an arrangement in which two armature members, for example, pipe couplings, are fitted one within the other along conical contact surfaces 26a, 27a as shown in Fig. 1a. The armature member 11 is notched as shown at 11b and the armature member 27 is notched as shown at 12b. The sealing member 13 is of T-shape and is interposed between the armature members, such that when the armature members are axially moved by a clamping means 30 to a locking or mounting position, as shown in Fig. 11 the wings 15, 16 are deformed to seal against facing conical surfaces of the armature members while the rigid stem 14 is formed with side clearance spaces with the respective armature members and the end face of the stem rides on surface 22 of armature member 11.

In contrast, Stobbart shows two facing opposed flanged members 2, 3 which do not fit one within the other along conical surfaces as in the present

invention but rather are axially brought together by a clamp to secure a seal member therebetween. The seal member has angled sealing lips 6, 7 connected to a spigot portion 9 by a thin web portion 8 forming a cross-section of dumbbell-like shape. The spigot portion 9 is received in respective complimentary shaped recesses or grooves 10, 11 in members 2, 3. A limit contact position between members 2 and 3 is determined by their flat confronting faces as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. This is clearly distinguished from the overlapping conical armature members of the present invention.

Furthermore, as distinguished from the present invention Stobbart provides a specific function for the spigot 9 in that at a predetermined radial deflection of the sealing ring, the radially innermost portion of the spigot engages with the radially innermost wall of annular recess 11. This forces additional radial deflection or bending of the seal lips 6, 7 as the joint is tightened . In the present invention, the flanges 15, 16 provide the sealing arrangement and the stem has clearance with the side walls of the armature members while its outer surface 14a glidingly and slidingly rides on the support surface 22 of the armature member 11. The armature members are not formed with complimentary recesses to receive spigot 9 as in Stobbart which becomes deformingly secured between members 2, 3. In the invention, the wings provide the sealing when the conical armature members are secured together and the stem provides clearances to enable proper fit of the armature members while the armature member 11 slides on the outer surface the stem. After installation, expansion or contraction of the armature members will not disturb the seal as

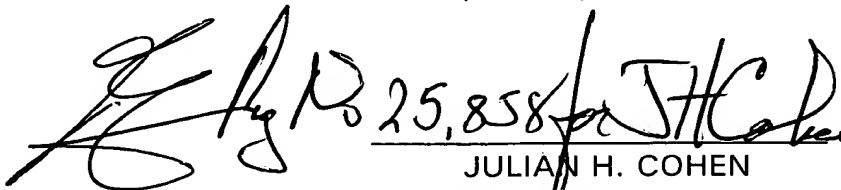
the stem is not deformed in its space.

Claim 26 has been amended to refer to the construction of the armature members as being fitted within one another along conical contact surfaces 26a, 27a between which the stem of the T-shaped sealing ring is engaged with clearance while the end face of the stem rides on the gliding support surface of the armature member 11.

Claims 27-30 are dependent from claim 26 and are thereby deemed to be allowable therewith. Claims 31-35 have been added and are dependent directly or indirectly from claim 26 and recite additional features relating to the patentable subject matter of claim 26.

Based on the above action and comments, it is respectfully that the claims are now all in allowable condition and early dispatch of the Notice of Allowance would be appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



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